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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JEDDAH 000368

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JEDDAH 00000368 001.2 OF 002

SUBJECT: MOSQUE SERMONS FROM SAUDI ARABIA MAY 12:
TECHNOLOGY SPREADS IMMORALITY, PALESTINIAN HEROES SUFFER AT
HANDS OF WEST AND ITS ARAB PROXIES, FAITH WILL TRIUMPH OVER
ADVERSITY IN LIFE AND IN PALESTINE AND IRAQ, AND A PLEA FOR
HONESTY AND FAIRNESS IN THE STOCK MARKET

REF: JEDDAH 357

Classified By: Consul General Tatiana Gfoeller, for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

FROM THE EASTERN PROVINCE: CONTINUED CONDEMNATION OF
TECHNOLOGY AND ADVOCACY OF PALESTINE

¶1. (C) For the second consecutive week, Shaikh Mohammad al-Qahtani lectured the congregation at the Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal Mosque in al-Khobar about the dangers associated with technology and the unpardonable suffering of the Palestinians. His sermon began by denouncing rumors, but then distinguished the tiny effect of rumors in earlier days because of the limited means of spreading rumors. Today, he complained modern technology multiplies the adverse effects of rumors. He blamed the media, the internet, and most particularly, his favorite target, satellite TV for propagating rumors which cause "many acts of violence that grip the world nowadays and have caused countless suffering (sic) and unnecessary deaths." He accused the modern mass media of willingly spreading heresy. He warned of further and greater acts of violence occurring unless the media is contained soon.

¶2. (C) He then bewailed the suffering of the Palestinian people under the Israeli occupation. He described their increasing difficulty in feeding themselves and their families, the lack of drugs and medicine, their lack of funds and deteriorating educational system, all of which he attributed to the American and Western boycott that was instituted to punish them for exercising their democratic rights, rights that American had called for. He described the Palestinians as "heroes who deserve everyone's support and respect."

¶3. (C) He then criticized Arabs and Arab governments for withholding food and financial assistance from the Palestinians and also for preventing others from offering aid. His strongest criticism was directed at Arab banks and financial institutions which he accused of being mere proxies of the West employed to wage war on the Palestinians. Rising to even greater fury, he called on the "faithful to boycott

banks that refuse to transfer money or aid to the people of Palestine in this time of extreme hardship and suffering. He concluded with the pronouncement that the Palestinians do not have much to lose. "They only have roads to cross. They'll either come out victorious or they'll all become martyrs. There's nothing else left for them. It's the end of the road."

FROM MECCA: FAITH WILL PERMIT MUSLIMS TO OVERCOME ADVERSITY IN PALESTINE AND IRAQ

¶4. (U) On May 12, speaking at the holy mosque in Mecca, Shaykh Abd-al-Rahman called on Muslims to have faith when faced with adversity. Muslims, he announced, must believe that there must be an end to misfortunes, and continued "we are optimistic of such relief for the sufferings of our brothers in Palestine and the Land of the Two Rivers (Iraq.) . The lesson ended with the familiar prayer to strive to "achieve Islamic unity and deprive the lurking enemies of any opportunity."

¶5. (U) His second sermon mirrored the first in encouraging Muslims to maintain their faith and meet adversity with "sweet satisfaction." It concluded with the customary appeal to God to "support Islam and Muslims, humble non-belief and unbelievers, destroy the enemies of religion, and make this and other Muslim countries safe and secure."

FROM MEDINA: IMAM CALLS FOR HONESTY IN BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS

¶6. (U) In his sermon from the Prophet's Mosque in Medina on May 12, Imam Shaykh Husayn ibn-Abd-al-Aziz Al al-Shaykh reminded Muslims that they are bound to deal honestly with others in business transactions. Just as the Koran forbids the sale of produce before it is ripe, so it is impermissible to overprice or outbid others to increase the price of a commodity, "as is now happening in the stock exchange market."

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¶7. (U) The imam's second sermon continued his observations on proper behavior in Saudi Arabia's disconcertingly volatile stock market, noting that "Islam is a religion of mercy and pity, tolerance and facilitation. Some financial corporations," he stormed, "are afflicted by the strong urge to make illicit profit and thus exploit people." He condemned this as against the morals of Islam.

¶8. (U) Reaching beyond the commercial, the imam concluded his homily with the prayer to "God to support Palestinians and Iraqis against their enemies."
Gfoeller